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ABSTRACT

Education is one means by which minority women in the United States and the United Kingdom may be encouraged to build their own particular escape from racism, sexism, and poverty. Of particular importance in their educational preparation to compete in the world are expansion of language competency and an understanding of their own culture and other cultures within their multi-racial, multi-ethnic societies. Other basic educational requirements include: (1) basic health and sex education; (2) family life studies; (3) history of women; (4) political education; and (5) career preparation. Because the socialization of girls in West Indian and East Indian families in Great Britain and in black and Chicano families in the United States exemplifies the concept of cultural dissonance, the education of minority women must help them to break free of the patterns imposed upon them by their own ethnic groups and the larger society. In general, minority women must begin to view themselves and their role in society in a way that will encourage greater self-confidence and help them to determine their future life styles. (Author/WI)

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ESCAPE FROM RACISM, SEXISM, AND POVERTY FOR MINORITY WOMEN: U.S.A. AND U.K.

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ESCAPE FROM RACISM, SEXISM, AND POVERTY

FOR MINORITY WOMEN:

U.S.A. and U. K..*

Today's growing girl in the U.S.A. and the United Kingdom finds herself not only in a world that is changing significantly but also in cultural milieus where the role expectations for women are broadening. For minority women, these changes create an even greater juxtaposition of the female traditions in their respective subcultures and the part women are beginning to play in each dominant culture. Their growing daughters, even more than they themselves, encounter cultural dissonance, which is further confounded by the so-called double jeopardy of racism and sexism still awaiting American and British minority girls as they move into adulthood. Both countries have a distinct history of discriminating against women and those of Black, Asian, or Indian origins. Mexican-Americans are a racial mixture and have also been relegated until recently in most cases to a virtual caste status in many American communities. This situation results in women from these minorities being subject to what might be designated as a multiplier factor. They are subject , first, to the restrictions placed on them by their own culture and, second, to the restrictions placed on women by the dominant or mainstream culture. Since so many are poor, they are, in addition, constrained by the economic, social, and political restrictions which so often accompany poverty in American or British society.

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The Status of Minorities: U.S.A. and U.K.

U. S. A.

For Blacks and Mexican-Americans, or Chicanos, the promises of America have often been withheld. In the South, Blacks were enslaved and overworked. No legal marriages were permitted for slaves; their families were disrupted by their masters' selling one or another member and their masters' sexual liberties with Black women. Even after emancipation and the Reconstruction period, Blacks had to attend a separate, poorly financed, and inadequately developed educational system, among other forms of discrimination that continued against them. Later, as Blacks came North, they had little choice but to join their"brothers" in the slums of the cities. Chicanos fared no better. They built their barrios in Los Angeles, San Antonio, Houston, and other cities, or they inhabited the squalid migrant workers' housing during the harvest seasons when they worked as agricultural laborers in California, Texas, Colorado, Arizona, and elsewhere. In Arizona and Texas their children were in separate schools, at least until the Desegregation Decision of the United States Supreme Court (- Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas -) in 1954. Whatever school they attended, they immediately upon registration were forbidden to speak Spanish, the language of their homes. If their English was poor, they were not always carefully tutored to master the language of the American mainstream. If they dropped out of high school, few persons showed concern. Their job prospects, as was true for Blacks, were such that they would need no specialized skills. Except for those

Blacks who chose to become teachers or ministers for their own people, most other Blacks and all Chicanos hired out into service occupations, farm laborers's jobs, unskilled or at most semi-skilled factory work, or they entered the rolls of the unemployed.

Income statistics certify to their plight. Even in 1974 annual family income for Blacks averaged $ 7,808 and for Mexican-Americans, $ 9,498, but for whites the average was $ 13,356. (See Table 1.) Among the last only 7 percent had incomes of $ 4,000 per year, a figure clearly in the poverty level range. For Blacks this percentage was 23 and for Mexican-Americans, 15 percent. One-fifth of these minority families had an annual family income of $ 15,000 or more, but again white families fared far better; 42 percent of them had incomes at or above that figure.

Table 1

Family Income in 1974 of Families with Head of Spanish (Mexican) Origin, Also of Families of White and Black Race: Mar. 1974

Family Head Origin	Median Family Income	% with Family Income below $ 4,000	% with Income of $ 15,000 or more
Mexican	$ 9,498	15	20
Black	7,808	23	19
White	13,356	7	42

Source: U.S.Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, p. 20, No. 283, August 1975 (Adv. Report); p. 23, No. 54, July 1975.

Black and Chicano women have labored side by side with their men as migrant workers. They have also worked as domestics or as other kinds of low-skilled service workers. Subject to the ravages of the

welfare system, earlier prohibitions against distribution of birth control information or against abortion, and unstable marriages, Black women, in particular, often have been the main breadwinners of their families. Mexican-American women have born many children and coped with poverty and with language and social distance from the American mainstream. They have shown deference to the Church and the males in their families. They have tried to preserve a heritage derived from their Indian, Spanish, and Mexican roots in a setting which upheld the "melting pot" theory of assimilation of immigrants but also practiced racism.

In addition to racial discrimination, Black and Chicano women have experienced the sex discrimination which has generally prevailed in the United States. Job opportunities until most recently have been largely restricted to the traditional jobs for women. Equal pay requirements did not exist for a long time. Laws favored the male in marriage, credit, and property settlements after divorce. Educational opportunity for minority women were often even more restricted than for minority males. Most of all, jobs were largely limited to those which paid the least. Even traditionally female jobs such as secretary, salesclerk, teacher, or nurse were difficult for minority women to obtain. ". . . Unemployment among adults . . . since 1963 . . . has been most severe for women of minority races."[1] In all, no better evidence seems to exist than the earnings data collected by the United States Department of Commerce. Median annual earnings substantiate the double jeopardy of racism and sexism experienced by minority women in America. (See Table 2.)[2]

Table 2

Median Annual Earnings

Origin	Female	Male
Spanish-speaking	$ 2,647	$ 5,786
Black	5,147	7,301
White	5,998	10,593

Source: U.S.Bureau of the Census, Persons of Spanish Origins in the United States, March 1973, p. 7.

As victims of racism and sexism in the United States, Black women and Chicanas have experienced discrimination in education, employment, earnings, housing, law enforcement -- proportionately more Black males are jailed than holds true for white males -- and so on. American society has largely viewed these women as different and as replaceable human beings. The Black writer, Abbey Lincoln, has capsulized this condition. [3]

> We are the women whose husbands and fathers and brothers and sons have been plagiarized, imitated, denied, and robbed of the fruits of their genius, and who consequently we see emasculated, jailed, lynched, driven mad, deprived, enraged, and made suicidal. We are the women whom nobody, seemingly, cares about, who are made to feel inadequate, stupid, and backward, and who inevitably have the most colossal inferiority complexes to be found.

United Kingdom.

In the United Kingdom West Indians and East Asians, in addition to

the Irish, represent the largest immigrant groups entering the country. As with Blacks and Chicanos in the United States, they in no way resemble each other culturally, but they are subjected to similar forms of discrimination. Still considered inferior because of their color and colonial origins,[4] West Indians and East Asians hold the poorest paying jobs, those the society considers least desirable. West Indians speak English but often a dialect of Creole considerably at variance with standard English. Whether Pakistani or Indian, East Asians may speak English, although it is often not their first language and they and their children may not speak English very well. Immigrants occupy the poorest housing in many British cities. By January 1972 immigrant children represented 3.3 percent of all pupils in maintained primary and secondary schools. Of these " . . . 36.4 percent came from the West Indies, 20.1 percent from India, 10.9 percent from Pakistan. . . ."[5] Special compensatory educational measures to aid these children are only in the early stages of application, perhaps because each group, East Asians and West Indians, are implicitly viewed as members of separate castes in England.[6] The intensity and length of the Parliamentary debate of the Race Relations Bill substantiates the prevalence of this social attitude in Britain.[7]

Cultural Dissonance and Minority Girls.

Under these social conditions, minority girls in the United States and the United Kingdom find themselves subject to several forms of cultural dissonance which serves to interfere in the educational process into which they are routed by the authorities. The term cultural dissonance draws attantion to the juxtaposition of disparate cultural expectations for an individual growing up as a member of aminority group.

Cultural dissonance is exemplified by the socialization of girls in West Indian and East Asian families in Great Britain and Black and Chicano families in the United States. What role expectations are conveyed to girls in each community and what career aspirations are fostered? What view of self can one conjecture develops?

United Kingdom.

West Indians. -- The West Indians's life style in England reflects cultural patterns brought from the Caribbean. There the male verifies his masculinity by having women bear his offspring, even if poverty precludes a European style marriage. The 70 percent rate of illegitimacy in Jamaica is accepted as a normal phenomenon.[8] Once in Britain, the male can exhibit his manliness in few new ways. He does not acquire much education since he seldom has access to grammar schools or the prestigious public schools. He is in effect barred from most well paying or esteemed jobs. He continues to exercise his interest in procreation through a rather open, common law approach to marriage. In other words, the West Indian society whether in the Caribbean or in England, does not demand formalized, lifelong marriages.

For the West Indian woman living in London or some other urban area, the implications of these marital patterns create economic uncertainty and stress. Close to 50 percent of West Indian women are on their own.[9] Many have small children, whom they raise without the benefit of a permanent spouse or an extended family. The family's economic and, of course, psychological well being fall to the mother. Often employed outside the home, she places her children with a child-minder, a neighborhood West Indian woman who earns a living overseeing groups of

these children during the workday.[10]

In all likelihood, this child-minder will pass on to the children in her charge the traditional heritage of West Indians. She will thereby reinforce the cultural isolation from mainstream British society which the children's parents themselves experience through ghettoized housing patterns and job allocation extant in England today.

For the girl being socialized in these surroundings several distinct role expectations emerge. She sees her future heterosexual relations as warm and at the same time her liaisons with males are not likely to be permanent. She knows motherhood lies on the road ahead. Like her own mother, she anticipates joining the labor force in a relatively unskilled capacity. "Typical employment for West Indian women would be catering, transport and laundering. . . ."[11] Since the girl expects to have to handle her roles of wife, mother, and breadwinner simultaneously, she may begin to view her status as an adult as equal to that of the adult male, at least in the local West Indian community. Here she may develop a real sense of personal warmth. What she may not acquire in these surroundings are proficiency in standard English or a sense of mainstream cultural values.

East Asians. -- The young girl growing up in one of Britain's East Asian communities encounters quite a different set of experiences. She is encouraged to do well in her schoolwork, although from early on she knows that her schooling will probably not go beyond the years of compulsory attendance. While she may even attain some vocational skill, she will make use of that skill only until an early marriage. If she is employed anywhere after she leaves school, she will work side by side with other East Asian females. Since most East Asian families in

England are among the poor, mothers do work outside the home, albeit in low paying jobs, to supplement the family's income. Young girls are expected to help at home,[12] where the extended family may be smaller than it was in its pre-emigration days outside of Britain. For girls marriage continues to be arranged in rather the traditional manner. Since that process requires that the girl has had carefully screened heterosexual contacts in adolescence, East Asian parents closely supervise their teenage daughters.[13] In contrast to West Indian customs, their marriages tend to be formalized and more stable.

Indian women derive their status from their role of child-bearing and child-rearing and of taking care of husband and home.[14] While men and women are separated by social taboos and tradition in the Indian as well as Pakistani home, their inferiority to the male is more firmly embedded in the latter case where the Koran has clearly prescribed that status relationship.[15]

These cultural patterns surely imprint themselves on the growing girl and leave her with fairly clear role expectations. Unless she rejects her cultural background, she will acquiesce to an arranged marriage. She will bear and raise her husband's children. She may eventually work outside the home but probably only in a place where other East Asian women work. For the outside world she will appear to accept a status inferior to that of the male in her subculture.

Work/Career. -- Naturally, school performance and, more particularly, career aspirations are affected by the role expectations of West Indian

and East Asian girls living in England. Three-fifths of West Indian women and one-half of East Asian women are in the labor force.[16] Thus West Indian girls anticipate entry into the labor market but find opportunity for advancement or for anything but low level jobs highly unlikely to come their way. They also anticipate that their life will be divided between a job, a male, and children yet to be borne. To aspire to a career either generated through vocational or professional preparation or on-the-job advancement appears out of tune with these role expectations. Similarly, an East Asian girl in England sees herself working only briefly after her school years in a place approved by her parents. If not actually employed, the girl is at home, perhaps to care for young brothers or sisters while her mother is at work. Again, the thought of a career enters the mind of only those few girls from upper class East Asian families living in Britain. For neither most East Asian nor West Indian girls does British postsecondary education appear to be an option.

Status of Women in British Society. -- How do these expectations compare with those of other girls in Britain? In general, girls in England find access to apprenticeships far more limited than do boys. They experience such forms of sexism in education as (1) single sex schools with boys' schools being more prestigious and preferred by capable male teachers, (2) counselors who steer girls into the humanities in the Sixth Form thereby eliminating these students' future access to subjects that require a mathematics or science background, and (3) reduced exposure even in comprehensive schools to science and industrial arts classes. Even for non-immigrant females in the British labor force wage scales and employment opportunities favor males. So do aspects

of the law and the National Health Service. Women, too, still experience discrimination although in recent years parliamentary actions have ameliorated obvious forms and in general have served to raise the level of awareness of many Britons in regard to the sexism extant in their society.[17] For young girls growing up among the working class of that society, role expectations largely consist of being a school girl to age 16, then a clerk, shopgirl, or unskilled factory worker for a few years, and finally a wife and young mother with no job outside the home. Even for those who remain in school through part or all of the Sixth Form, the role expectations may be nearly identical. "One-third of all married women are at work (in Briatain), yet girls of 16 persist in a romantic expectation of marriage at the age of 20 and no further employment."[18]

Some girls, of course, avail themselves of postsecondary education including higher education and preparation for a profession. Still, access for females to corresponding educational programs has so far been more difficult than for males. The Open University's popularity with women attests to that roadblock and also to the changing aspirations of a considerable number of women in England. At least 40 percent of the enrollees at the Open University are female, and a sizeable number of these hold clerical positions, occupations traditionally considered appropriate even for the brightest of female achievers in school.[19] British women presumably are aware of the increased rate of female participation in the labor force, a figure which today stands at 42 percent.[20] Young women, too, tend to remain in the labor force even after marriage, and child-bearing has been limited through family planning, which receives government support. Britain's birthrate now

stands at 13.9.[21]

Whatever cultural dissonance exists for minority women in England, that phenomenon is not wholly absent from the lives of women there in general. While females still find themselves subject to sexism in the labor market and in the educational system, minority women encounter racism as well. In view of the increasing awareness that the society must move to reduce racism and sexism, the education of girls, including particularly West Indian and East Asian ones, may be altered so as better to prepare them to share more equitably in British life and society.

U. S. A.

Cultural dissonance for American minority women takes on a form not altogether different from that experienced by minority women in Great Britain. They, too, find themselves subject to racism and sexism. Girls in either Black or Mexican-American subcultures face conflicting forces at home, at school, and in their prospective adult life.

The Black Woman. -- From early on Black girls become aware of the ghettoized existence of their families. Except for the small percentage who live in truly integrated neighborhoods, Black families share their street with other Blacks. That street may well be located in the older part of their town, in a decaying inner city, or in a low-cost government housing project. The growing girl recognizes that family units consist of a male, maybe a grandmother, surely a mother, and her children. The children in the household do not necessarily have the same father, and the man who lives in the household may be the father of none of the children there. The same girl may begin to realize that several mothers are single parents. " . . . About

34 percent of Black families are headed by women[22](compared to 11 percent of white families) . . . "[23] and the percentage is highest among the poorest Black families.[24] Whatever their marital status,[25] many women will set off to work each day. ". . . In Black families, 65 percent of the female spouses worked full or part time whereas only 44 percent of the white spouses were thus employed (in 1972)."[26] Today that figure has risen to 47.1 percent.[27]

The growing Black girl may also become sensitive to the general level of poverty around her. Between the material wealth shown on the ever present television screen and the replication and promises of middle class America conveyed in her school, the Black girl develops doubts about her place in American society, for it is likely to be at variance with those images. By the time she enters school,she may already have experienced the moment when she learned that being Black is not the accepted norm in parts of America. The lack of acceptance or even the exclusion of her family by mainstream America, that is, the dominant forces in the society, deprives her of full-scale participation. The home environment in which she is nurtured, often with much love and affection, lacks the economic security and at times the knowledge base considered ideal for American parents.

As the girl moves into her teenage years, she begins to feel ready to have intercourse. Within the family the teenage Black American female has already learned about sex and about social disease. Of her teenage acquaintenances some become pregnant or practice birth

control.[28] At the same time, she hears that Black women are greatly angered by the fact that some Black men date and marry white women.[29] She becomes more cognizant of the tangle of male-female relationships in the Black American adult society.[30] She may begin to sense that the assertion of Black masculinity is beginning to alter the role of the Black female. "The Black man has demanded that the white society acknowledge his manhood and deal directly with him instead of using his woman -- the weaker sex -- as his buffer."[31]

> The strong roles which Black women have traditionally played are now coming into sharp focus amid the controversy over whether or not she should basically be a passive supporter of Black men or should continue to assert her individuality and make the contributions to the Black community that she has always proved capable of making. Many Blacks have already redefined the woman's role to be that of the passive, non-assertive individual, whose major function is to be supportive of her spouse (defined in this context as husband or boyfriend).[32]

Many Black women neither want to overshadow nor dominate the Black male, but they are not yet willing to assume a consistently passive role so long as Black males exhibit unstable job histories or family loyalties and less education than they,[33] and white males continue to sexually exploit the Black woman.[34] Black women still stay in school longer and once in college are more likely to complete a degree program than are Black males.[35] (See Table 3.)

Table 3

Educational Level by Race and Sex

	Black		White	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
Median level of education (1972)	10.9	11.1	12.4	12.3
High school drop-outs (1972) between ages 14-24	17.8	17.2	10.7	11.9
18-24 year olds in college (1972)	19	14	29	21
% of Black students in 4-year colleges who complete B.A. (1972):				
White 4-year colleges	49	59.4		
Black 4-year colleges	60	70.6		
1971 freshmen who aspire to M.A.	32.1	38.3		
Prof'l/doctoral degrees, by sex				
1968			87.2	12.8
1969	94.5	5.5		

Source: Minority Women & Higher Education # 1. Women, AAC. (Nov., 1974), pp. 2-3.

In a recent study of 286 female Black college seniors and sophomores attending Black colleges of the Southeast and Middle Atlantic region, Mednick and Puryear found that a Black woman's earnings are considered very important to family income. Most interviewees anticipated a lifetime of work outside their home. "Eighty-seven percent of the women expected to return to work by the time their children reached first grade. . . ."[36] Other studies suggest a similar acceptance by many Black women of multiple roles as mother,

wife, employee, and homemaker,[37] perhaps because they recognize the economic necessity to do so. Somewhat in contrast, in a 1972 study Gump found that ". . . Black women were much more likely than white women to endorse the position that a woman's identity is derived primarily from marriage, that a mother with children should remain in the home, and that a woman should be submissive in relation to men. The white respondents were more interested in achieving fulfillment for themselves than in fostering the achievements of their children and husbands at their own expense."[38]

On the basis of her observations at home and in the society at large, the Black girl surely considers what emotional and financial partnership and support she will seek in her future husband. That marriages are frought with instability and uncertainty becomes clear as she surveys the marital status of the Black women around her.[39] (See Table 4.)

Table 4

Marital Status of Females
14 Years or Older, 1970

Marital Status	Race	
	Black	White
Married, spouse present	42.0 %	60.3 %
Divorced	4.3	3.4
Widowed	13.5	12.4
Single	28.0	21.3

Source: U.S.Civil Rights Commission, Civil Rights Digest. Spring, 1974, p. 59.

The work history of many of these women equally indicates that participation in the labor force offers no panacea. Too often the work assigned to the Black woman is monotonous, poorly paid, and denigrated by the society. She may not have been aided through education, occupational planning, or financial assistance to acquire a skill which would permit her entry into a better paying, more respected occupation.[40] Even though Black women tend to be in the labor force for many years unless young children, inadequate daycare facilities, or personal disorganization keep them "on welfare", they even more than white women fail to propel themselves into a sustained career in which advancement occurs periodically. As recently as 1971, ". . . nearly half of all employed Black women worked as household domestics or in service occupations not covered by the Federal minimum wage law."[41] Even for Black women who have graduated from college access to many occupations has been highly restricted. They earn only 78.8 percent of Black male college graduates and only 54.2 percent as much as equivalent white males.[42] The maturing Black girl gradually finds out how the structures of racism and sexism affect the Black woman in American society.

The Chicana. -- The Mexican-American girl so far has experienced a somewhat different childhood and youth. While also subject to poverty and life in the barrios, a young Chicana usually sees her mother mainly as a homemaker although, in fact, Spanish-speaking women's labor force participation rate is only slightly below the national average for all women.[43] The young Chicana notes that her father is a status person within the family and her brothers seem more important than she and her sisters. Spanish remains the language of the home. Noone in the family

may yet be the beneficiary of either postsecondary education or advancement into skilled or semi-professional occupations.[44] In 1973 the median level of years of education for Mexican-Americans was only 9 years;[45] 5.9 percent of Mexican-American women had completed 4 years of college.[46] The economic uncertainty which surrounds her family is often mediated by adherence to Catholicism and her brothers and sisters who supplement parental affection and attention within the family.

Among Mexican-Americans Mary, the mother of Jesus, is revered for her role as nurturer, for ". . . her endurance of pain and sorrow, for her willingness to serve, and for her role as teacher of her son's word."[47]

> Marianismo,(veneration of the Virgin Mary,) has had tremendous impact upon the development of the Chicana. Within many Chicano homes, La Virgen -- under various titles, but especially as La Virgen de Guadalupe -- has been the ultimate role model for the the Chicano woman.[48]

For Chicanos the ideal woman is a wife and mother devoted to her family and to her church. Self-fulfillment supposedly consists of achieving these roles.

The Mexican-American girl's experience at school has additionally affected her later employability.

> A significant disqualifying factor which the Chicana faces is inadequate preparation in communication skills . . . . For the monolingual or marginal English speaking Chicana, job opportunities in the labor market are primarily menial. . . . Unsuccessful reading and writing programs have failed to

> prepare the Chicana for vocational training or job opportunities. The low retention of Chicanas in the secondary schools, 70 percent drop out before the tenth grade, inadvertantly fails to make available to the Chicana even the traditionally oriented feminine curriculum, i. e., typing, Business English, shorthand, which are offered in the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.[49]

In that setting the growing Mexican-American girl until recently has interpreted her future role expectation to consist of school attendance until age 16 or even high school graduation and marriage, motherhood, and homemaking soon thereafter. She has not necessarily anticipated any kind of extended or remunerative participation in the labor market. Nor has she sought equality with males inside or outside the family.[50] Rather, she has seen her future life as being family centered[51] and concentrated on coping successfully with poverty and exclusion from mainstream America.

Today the winds of change have reached Chicanas, too. While still perceiving ". . . discrimination on the basis of race as being more pervasive than sex discrimination. . .,"[52] some Chicanas are beginning to question the role which the Church seems to have unilaterally imposed on them. They wish access to abortions and family planning. Some also are vocalizing their concern for intellectual self-fulfillment as one form of affirmation of equality in America. Others are willing to pursue "affirmative action," that is the rights of equality in employment and education, as a means of reducing discrimination, even if Chicanos may feel threatened by such action.[53] While reluctant to join wholeheartedly in the Women's Movement, some Chicanas provide

leadership in the struggle to fight racism within the larger society and sexism and poverty within their own community. Two actions testifying to the latter goal are these Chicanas' stress on limited family size and on fluency in English for the children they do have. Even these women, along with their Black sisters, harbor a fear that the Anglo dominated Women's Movement would have them ignore the struggle for racial equality to which Chicanos and Chicanas are committed first of all.[54]

White Middle Class American Girls. -- When one compares young Black girls and Chicanas with white girls from America's broad middle classes, some differences may be noted. Within the family the latter may be brought up to aspire to eventual marriage but also to count on participating in the labor force before marriage and children and again once these spend a great part of each day in school. To do well at school, to seek a high school diploma and even to sample a college education for a while receive approbation. Both school and family convey America's belief (1) in equality, (2) in the beneficial rewards of hard work, (3) in the utilization of technology-based creature comforts, and (4) in teaching, nursing, secretarial services, sales clerking, and social work as occupations appropriate for women. Girls are counseled to prepare for one or another of these in high school or college. Whether to opt seriously for a career alongside of marriage and motherhood is quite another matter although the impact of the Woman's Movement has been such as to raise the question. The labor force participation rate for white women has also steadily increased until today at 44.5 percent it is only

slightly below that of minority women, namely 47.9 percent.[55]

Enough popular psychology permeates the American middle class belief system that credance has been given to the desirability of everyone having a 'positive self-concept.' One should think well of oneself and develop self-confidence. If Judaeic-Christian principles are espoused, as is often the case at least nominally, one's 'right' acts sustantiate one's positive self-concept. The consciousness raising engaged in by the Woman's Movement is intended to increase the women's self-awareness and in time their self-confidence.

Some of the white middle class beliefs about female role expectations have received partial acceptance by minorities; others have been rejected. A number of American minority girls have modified the dominant belief system where they sense the contradiction inherent in the racism, sexism, and poverty to which that dominant society too often subjects them. For example, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s pronouncement that "Black is beautiful," has been accepted by young Black women over and over again.

Education of Minority Girls.

On the basis of their role expectations and the current status of their families in the dominant culture, one may draw certain implications for the education of minority girls in the United Kingdom and the United States. The cultural dissonance they experience in both countries may induce a more passive, accepting behavior on their part which may reduce the potency of their own efforts to reduce racism, sexism, and their own poverty. They may not recognize the fact that for the dominant culture

education provides the means, that is the learning, which enables one to manipulate that culture for one's own purposes. If an assumption of equality of opportunity undergirds the society's value system, educational arrangements must be such as to facilitate minority girls' preparation to live within their own subculture, to press, if they wish, for its transformation, to pursue a career of their own choosing and to participate in the dominant culture, and, if they so wish, to assimilate themselves in the mainstream as they attain the independence concomitant with adulthood. What educational practices recommend themselves under these circumstances?

A most urgent requirement of educational practice appears to be a clear recognition on the part of teachers and educational administrators that minority girls are capable of learning. One must assume the same ability spread as is found in the population at large. A National Foundation for Educational Research study of 1976 pointed out that "teachers tend to have stereotyped opinions about West Indian pupils, often unfavorable. . ." both in regard to their academic and their social behavior.[56] Other teachers fail to provide enough assistance to pupils for whom English is a second language.[57] Too often teachers either think minorities are indeed inferior or they anticipate that minority girls will hold only unskilled jobs like their mothers do. The self-fulfilling prophesy results in teachers shunting aside, unresolved, whatever learning problems minority girls may encounter. Clearly, an acceptance of the need to offer these pupils as well as

encouragement appears to be one way to make education functional for minority girls.

In both countries, the U.S.A. and the U. K., minority mothers have not always felt a welcome mat to be out forthem at the schools their children have been required to attend. Perhaps too little effort has been made in the past to encourage these women to come by the school to discuss any problems, be they educational or of any other type relating to their families' welfare. Nor have enough teachers and principals of such schools probably involved themselves sufficiently in their clients' community to fully understand the dynamics of that community as well as the specific concerns of their students' parents.[58]

Regardless of whether minority girls live in Great Britain or the United States, a crucial part of their education must focus on the continuous expansion of their language competency. In the case of East Asians in England and Mexican-Americans in the United States, such a concern requires the inclusion of bilingual education in the curriculum. English may have to be taught as a second language to enable the students to break out of the restrictions imposed on them by their limited command of English.

> . . . Immigrant pupils come from different societies where the pattern of living and of what is socially acceptable differs in many respects from the British pattern . . . . Adjustment to the new milieu is made the more difficult by the language problem . . . . One hears of some pupils who after even a year or more at school in Britain have hardly opened their mouths or uttered one word of English.[59]

To enhance a minority student's self-confidence as well as preparation for effective participation in the larger society implies continuous expansion of his or her language competence.[60] For minority girls versatility in English, whether in the U. K. or the U. S. A., becomes crucial if they are to be free to select and succeed in the occupation of their choice and in due time to aid their future families to reduce the aversive impact of racism and poverty.

Once language competence expands, these girls presumably will meet with increased success in learning to read well. That skill appears particularly useful as a means of expanding minority girls' self-confidence and knowledge to make decisions about personal and occupational goals. Through encounters with a variety of characters in literature, a woman's possible roles may be considered and personal sights may be raised or altered. In the literature of history accounts are found of how men and women have altered their world, however limiting or restrictive that world may have been. Always to be able to read for information frees that reader from ignorance and from debiliating uncertainty.

To help minority girls to accept themselves and their families in spite of the racism, sexism, and poverty to which society subjects them may mean that the teachers of reading take a look at Sylvia Ashton-Warner's work with Maori children in a New Zealand primary school. She encouraged her beginning pupils to tell her stories - of family, their environment, or their imagination. She recorded what they said and then read the stories over with them. An acceptance of the Maori culture was fundamental. The child had to feel that the stories of his or her people were as suitable to be put into print and to be read as stories drawn from the dominant culture.

A similar procedure, where necessary geared to older, more mature West Indian or East Asian, Black or Mexican-American girls, might encourage these to record the riches as well as the stresses of their families' traditions and current modes of life. In turn, these writings may become the reading materials for these girls and their non-immigrant classmates. They may even form the beginings of a literature of minority women. In the United States the literature produced by Black women today is a powerful vehicle for expressing the many levels of feeling in a world too often seared with racism, sexism, and poverty. for them

Another means of assisting minority girls to cope in the future is for schools to aid them to gain an understanding of the cultures around them, their own and the others in their multiracial, multi-ethnic societies. Shaping her cultural matrix in adulthood may be measurably eased if, for example, a West Indian girl fathoms that the vestiges of a matriarchy she notices among her people is attributable to the slavery origins of her ancestors. Should she wish to reject the female role attendant to a matriarchy, she very likely can do so in Britain without at least restraint from the dominant society. An East Asian girl needs to contrast the role of women circumscribed by the family, kinship, and caste systems of her parents' culture with practices prevalent among the British, her new fellow-countrymen. That older Mexican-American women are relatively more subservient to their husbands than are many other American women to their respective spouses is a social phenomenon a young Chicana must weigh as a possible guide to her own future behavior. The historic contribution to racial freedom of such Black women as Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth should serve to increase the Black girls pride in her racial heritage and, derivatively, her self-esteem.

The study of women generally is appropriate since it shows the common bond of women, so many of whom have experienced discrimination at the hands of their society,[61] be it the U. K. or the U. S. A., minority girls learn in school that in a democratic country everyone has ". . . the right to be treated with physical, mental, political, and economic respect, within the home, on the job, and in all other aspects of life."[62]

Other basic educational requirements would appear to be (1) health education including sex education to comprehend measures thought necessary to maintain health and eventually to engage in family planning; (2) family life studies to develop insight into male-female relations, parent-child relations, and home management; (3) history to meet women who asserted themselves to make a significant contribution to the world; (4) political education to grasp the citizen's role and power in the political process and to adjudge the growing political militancy of minorities; and (5) preliminary career preparation to expand occupational knowledge and to test occupational interests and potential. To achieve these ends schools need to counsel closely with minority girls. Personal, educational, and vocational guidance must be available. Minority women on the faculty or staff of the educational institution may serve as possible models. As minority girls encounter the effects of cultural dissonance, as well as an awareness of the everchanging nature of the cultural milieu around them, they need to feel free to talk with trusted teachers or counselors about their experiences and feelings and about possible courses of action or thought.

Once equipped with skills including a broad command of English, and with knowledge useful in the society and aware of the cultural dissonance that may be present in her life space, the maturing Black girl or Chicana in the United States and West Indian or East Asian girl in the United Kingdom, one hopes, will develop sufficient self-confidence to decide on her future life style. That the choice is up to each girl is basic to the perception of life in both countries. Julius K. Nyerere's theme in Education for Self-Reliance holds true.

> The education provided must . . . encourage the development in each citizen of three things: an enquiring mind; an ability to learn from what others do, and reject or adapt it to his own needs; and a basic confidence in his own position as a free and equal member of the society, who values others and is valued by them for what he does and not for what he obtains.[63]

In line with Nyerere's stand and perhaps speaking for many minority women in the United States and Britain, June Jordan, an American poet, novelist, and film maker, summed up what she hopes to be the outcome of the liberation struggles.

> I will be free to be who I am, Black and female, without fear, without pain, without humiliation. That I will be free to become whatever my life requires of me, without posturing, without compromise, without terror. That I can count upon a sisterhood and a brotherhood that will let me give my life to its consecration, without equivocating, without sorrow.

> That my son, who is a Black man, and that I, a Black woman, may keep faith with each other, and with those others whom we may have the privilege to serve, and to join.[64]

Education seems to offer one means by which minority women in the United States and in the United Kingdom may be encouraged to build their own particular escape from racism, sexism, and poverty.

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